

NEWS from



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STATEMENT OF SUPERVISOR BILL POSTMUS REGARDING COUNTY BOARD'S DECISION TO DROP "MORNING-AFTER PILL" APPEAL

SAN BERNARDINO—First District San Bernardino County Supervisor Bill Postmus today released the following statement regarding the decision by the Board of Supervisors today to drop the County's efforts to receive a waiver of federal Title X regulations requiring the taxpayer-funded distribution of emergency contraceptive pills at County health clinics:

"I am disappointed by the Board's action today, which I believe to be a disservice to families and counties throughout the nation.

"The reasons for the waiver request included possible side effects, lack of long-term study of potential effects, and widespread disagreement in the scientific community over the actual classification of the treatment—specifically whether it constitutes pregnancy prevention, contraception or actual termination. The request also cited a desire to protect children, uphold community standards, preserve local control, and defend parental rights.

"On May 9, 2001, I sent a letter to U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson. In that letter I wrote that in the event the response from the CFHC were 'denied' or deemed 'unresponsive' I would take steps to see that the County appeals the CFHC's action to the Department. I encouraged the Department to review the issue and to intervene in this matter at the appropriate time, should it become necessary.

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"Nothing in the CFHC's 'denial' response received by the County on June 1 persuaded me to change course. In fact, in its response the CHFC was totally unresponsive with regard to the issues of community standards, local control, and parental rights. Therefore, I have urged my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors to continue to adhere to the Board's stated intention of March 13, 2001--to seek a waiver of the required provision of the morning-after pill.

"My original intent in bringing forward the motion to request the waiver was specifically to ensure that the County is able to exercise local discretion as to whether it should require parental notification in cases where the Emergency Contraceptive is requested on behalf of a minor. Acting upon legal advice, the Board determined that the only way to avoid having taxpayer-funded emergency contraceptives given to minors without parental consent would be to exclude the treatment altogether.

"I believe it is the opinion of the majority of this Board that parental consent is a valid local concern, and that the Board's request represents a desire to protect children, to uphold community standards, preserve local control, and to defend parental rights. Nothing in the CHFC's response letter changes this fact or even acknowledges the existence of these concerns.

"It would be in the best interests of families and of all counties for the Board of Supervisors to appeal the CFHC's decision on the morning-after pill waiver request to the new Administration in Washington. This would help ensure that the current practice of disallowing counties any discretion as to whether taxpayer-funded morning-after pills should be given to low-income women, particularly minors, may be comprehensively reviewed from a medical and public policy standpoint while respecting community standards, local control and parental rights."

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